



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

Harris County receiving \$1.1 billion in infrastructure and mitigation projects

At least \$500 million more to be distributed through Regional Mitigation Program

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AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced plans to subaward \$750 million in light of a denial by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of a direct allocation of mitigation funding for Harris County. The General Land Office (GLO) will be drafting an action plan that will include a set aside of Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding for \$750 million and direct at least \$500 million in additional funds to be distributed through the Regional Mitigation Program. Additional details will be released as the action plan amendment is finalized in accordance with HUD rules and federal requirements.

“Money from the federal government is, as always, tied up with endless mounds of red tape and bureaucracy,” said Commissioner George P. Bush. “During Hurricane Harvey, Texans in Harris County undoubtedly suffered some of the costliest damage in the state. After considerable back and forth with the Biden Administration’s Department of Housing and Urban Development, the General Land Office will allocate \$750 million in funding for mitigation efforts in Harris County and continue to work around the federal government’s ever-changing bureaucratic demands.”

This brings the total infrastructure and mitigation investments in Harris County to more than \$1.1 billion. HUD gave a direct allocation of \$61,884,000 to the City of Houston in the CDBG-MIT. If approved by HUD, the \$750,000,000, plus \$117,213,862.96 in MIT awards for Harris County projects, plus the \$61,884,000 direct allocation of CDBG-MIT to the City of Houston, plus \$ 209,221,800 in infrastructure funds from CDBG-DR, equals \$1,138,319,662.96 in total investment in projects within Harris County.

In May, Commissioner Bush directed the GLO to request approval from HUD for Harris County to receive a direct allocation of \$750 million for mitigation efforts. In a written response (see below), HUD denied the GLO’s request. HUD also reaffirmed their position that mitigation funding is administered fundamentally different from traditional disaster recovery funding.

HUD’s spokesperson Mike Burns previously stated that, while HUD approved the state’s distribution plan, Texas was responsible for creating the allocation formula and has “full

responsibility and jurisdiction over who gets the money that was allocated to the state for flood mitigation." However, in their written response, HUD stated, "Unlike CDBG-DR allocations, which are allocated based on a long-established damage-based formula," CDBG-MIT funds were made available by Public Law 115-123, which regulates the dispersal of these funds. HUD is solely responsible for the contents of the Federal Register notice and can make changes to it in accordance with public laws passed by Congress.

HUD also noted the state may propose a "Substantial Amendment to make a subaward to Harris County with a portion of the State's CDBG-MIT funds and to provide the county with access to those funds through a sub-recipient agreement," noting the GLO must do so in adherence "with the requirements of the Federal Register notices governing CDBG-MIT funds." The GLO is already drafting an action plan to subaward \$750 million for Harris County while adding at least \$500 million to the Regional Mitigation Program, which will include at least \$418 million for the regional council of governments that includes Harris County.